

Fishing at Isle Royale

Fishing Licenses:

A Michigan fishing license is required for fishing in Lake Superior, including narrow bays and harbors, and when transporting fish from the island to the mainland. These regulations apply to all persons who have reached their 17th birthday. When fishing, you must carry your license and the identification used to purchase your license with you. Annual fishing licenses must be purchased on the mainland or on-line at www.MichiganDNR.com.

Only 24-hour licenses are available on the island and only when concession services are open.

Fishing without a license in Lake Superior carries a minimum fine of \$100. A fishing license is not required for fishing interior lakes and streams.

Possession Limits:

All fish in your possession count toward your limit, and must be measurable and identifiable by species. This requirement is best met by leaving the head and skin on.

For minimum size, daily possession limits, and seasons, please refer to the chart on page 7.

Disposal of Fish Remains

At Rock Harbor:

Use the fish cleaning station.

At Windigo:

Dump remains chopped up into pieces 4" or less in deep (50' or deeper) water.

At Lake Superior Campgrounds:

Please do not clean fish directly on docks. If cleaning fish at campgrounds, do so away from the docks and campsites. Remains can be cut into small pieces (less than 4") and left on the shore at least 100 feet from the campground and dock. Do not throw pieces into the water near shore or throw them to gulls. The preferred method is to dump remains chopped up into pieces 4" or less in deep (50' or deeper) water, as this reduces the unsightly remains and odors around campgrounds and the unnaturally large gathering of gulls at these sites.

At Interior Campgrounds:

Clean fish away from campsites and place remains on shore at least 100' away from the campground, between the waterline and the vegetation line. One purpose of these guidelines is to prevent stinking fish remains from ending up on the lake bottom near campgrounds.

Fishery Conservation

Remote natural areas such as Isle Royale provide opportunities for outstanding recreational fishing for wild, native fish that are replenished solely through natural reproduction. Wild fish populations are an integral part of a much larger aquatic and riparian ecosystem and often play a key role in the natural food web. How can you assist in conserving this fishery and minimize damage to the Isle Royale fishery?

- The park encourages anglers to catch only what they plan to keep or eat and then stop fishing and enjoy the many other attractions of Isle Royale. Catch and release, while encouraged, can be damaging and very stressful on fish. (Especially to lake trout brought up quickly from deep waters.)
- Know the minimum size of fish so that if they are too small they can be quickly released. Do not keep undersize fish - these are natural food for the local denizens such as loons, osprey, otters, and eagles. Releasing larger fish and keeping the medium size fish helps insure that there will be plenty of fish in the future. The larger fish may be 40-50 years old and produce more offspring than the smaller fish. The medium size fish are also better tasting, so consider taking pictures of the large fish, then carefully releasing them. Instead of killing trophy fish, please consider modern graphite mounts.
- Return fish you're not keeping to the water as soon as possible. While unhooking them, keep the fish in the water as much as possible. Use a net made of soft knotless mesh and try to net your fish head first. If you need to handle the fish, do so with a wet hand. Do not squeeze the fish or place fingers in the gills, since a torn gill can cause the fish to bleed to death.
- Remove the hook gently. Pliers work best. Cut the line near the hook if a fish is deeply hooked. A steel hook will decompose in time. Release your fish, gently moving it back and forth until its gills are functioning properly and the fish regains its balance. Once recovered, allow the fish to swim from your hands. Larger fish will take longer to recover.
- If fishing from shore, try to remove hooks while the fish are in the water; don't drag them up on the bank.

- Use only artificial lures (required in inland waters) as exotic species can accidentally be introduced by using live bait and live bait are often swallowed deeper resulting in more damage to fish.
- Avoid targeting fish that are threatened. (Such as the Coaster Brook Trout.)
- Avoid using split shot made of lead for weight. (Ingestion of lead is toxic to loons). Use single barbless hooks or bend down the barbs on the hooks. Using larger spoons when fishing for larger fish such as Northern Pike will help prevent catching as many undersize fish.

Transporting Fish to the Mainland

You are allowed only one day's catch in your possession. While the license

holder remains on the Island, Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) allows those with DNR permits to ship legally-taken fish on the Ranger III, Isle Royale Queen III, Wenonah, Voyageur II and the sea-plane. This one-time per year permit covers up to a single day's catch limit. Fish must be claimed when the ferry service arrives at their destination. Permits may be obtained by writing: Department of Natural Resources, 427 U.S. 41 North, Baraga, Michigan 49908-9627 or calling (906) 353-6651. Fishermen returning on the Ranger III must check in their fish with the ship's purser. Fish cannot be transported in coolers on private boats onboard the Ranger III.

Larry Kangas, West District Ranger

Taking Care of America's Castles

LAKE SUPERIOR'S IMMENSE SIZE makes it an inland sea capable of fierce storms that no ship can survive. Ten major shipwrecks lie on the bottom of Lake Superior around Isle Royale. To increase maritime safety for boats traveling these unruly waters, four lighthouses were constructed on Isle Royale. Of these, Isle Royale Lighthouse (Menagerie Island), Passage Island, and Rock of Ages are still owned and maintained by the United States Coast Guard.

Light stations are expensive to maintain. They no longer have live-in keepers devoted to day-to-day maintenance. In addition, modern technological advances such as GPS have made some lighthouses obsolete as navigational aids. These factors have led the Coast Guard to declare light stations as excess property. They are seeking new owners who will preserve them.

The Coast Guard is transferring ownership of lighthouses and light stations to other entities committed to long-term preservation - federal agencies, state parks and forests, local governments, or non-profit organizations. A few may even end up on the auction block, as the Granite Island lighthouse did in 2000. It's a big job; in Michigan alone there are 65 lighthouses currently involved or soon to begin the transfer process.

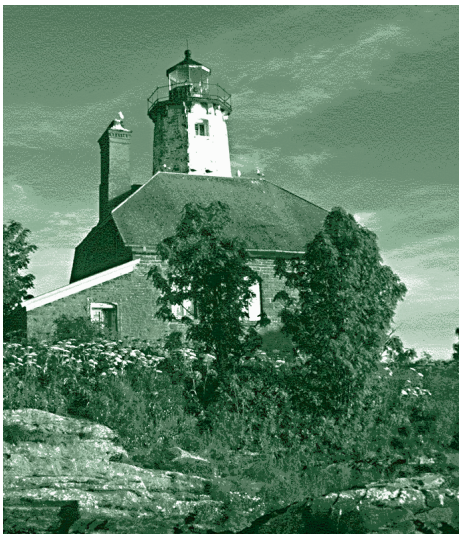
The three lighthouses at Isle Royale are in the process of being transferred from the Coast Guard to the National Park Service. It began with the three lighthouses being declared excess by the Coast Guard, at which point the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) became involved. The BLM deals with property that was reserved for Federal Government use and will handle the actual legal transfer.

The Coast Guard is responsible for completing environmental surveys of the sites, including identification of hazardous materials. Surveys are planned for the Isle Royale lights for the next two summers, with the transfers taking place after this work is completed.

To begin planning for the acquisition of the lighthouses, the park completed Condition Assessments of the structures. Fortu-



Passage Island Lighthouse



Isle Royale Lighthouse



Rock of Ages Lighthouse

nately, all were found to be in stable condition. The assessments, however, identified a lot of work to be done. This work will be done through a combination of federal funding, grants, volunteers, and partnership arrangements. The park is committed to being good stewards of these magnificent structures.

Liz Valencia, Branch Chief of Cultural Resources

Fish Consumption Advisory

Contaminants discovered in the Park ecosystem remind us that although Isle Royale is remote, it is part of a global system. Ongoing research in six inland lakes (Sargent, Siskiwit, Eva, Shesheeb, Wagejo, and Anglemorm) shows fish with mercury levels exceeding the State of Michigan fish consumption advisories.

Due to the widespread mercury contamination in the north central United States and Canada, Michigan's 2001 Fish Advisory includes fish consumption recommendations specific to mercury. Throughout Michigan, for walleye and northern pike, the State advises that no one should eat more than one meal a week, and that women of childbearing age and children under 15 should not eat more than one meal per month. Since fish in Isle Royale lakes have shown high levels of mercury, we recommend that visitors follow these State guidelines.

Other contaminants (PCBs and Chlordane) warrant similar advisories:

- For lake trout over 10" in Siskiwit Lake, only one meal per week is advised for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, women who intend to have children, girls over the age of 15, and all children under the age of 15. All sizes of lake whitefish carry this same advisory.
- For lake trout in Lake Superior, for this same group of women and children, only one meal per week is advised for fish from 10-18", and no lake trout over 18" in length should be consumed. For men, boys over the age of 15, and women beyond childbearing years, only one meal per week is advised from lake trout between 18-30" and no fish over 30" should be consumed.
- Other fish species in Lake Superior carrying consumption advisories include lake whitefish, lake herring, coho salmon, cisco, chinook salmon, and brown trout.

For more information, check with park staff or visit the Michigan Department of Community Health website at: www.mdch.state.me.us/pha/fish/index.htm